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Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 0375

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ECON, BU, NATO
SUBJECT: ECONADS: DRAFT REPORT TO NAC ON BULGARIAN ECONOMY

REF: A) USNATO A-27; B) SOFIA A-24, INFO USNATO

1. EMBASSY APPRECIATES PROBLEMS FACED IN TAKING INTO ACCOUNT MOST CURRENT INFORMATION IN PRODUCING COORDINATED PAPER OF THIS TYPE. IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE, HOWEVER, SUBSTANTIAL PORTIONS HAVE BEEN OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS, MAKING THE PAPER IN ITS PRESENT FORM OF LIMITED VALUE. FOR EXAMPLE, INFORMATION ON 1974 PLAN ACHIEVEMENT IS NOW AVAILABLE TO REPLACE PROJECTIONS OR SPECULATION CONTAINED IN DRAFT. FURTHER, INCREASE IN SOVIET OIL PRICES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1975 AND INTRODUCTION OF CEMA PRICE ADJUSTMENTS ON ANNUAL BASIS CAST MATTERS IN VASTLY DIFFERENT LIGHT. WITH THESE CAVEATS IN MIND, EMBASSY OFFERS FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON SUBJECT DRAFT.

2. PARAS 1 & 2 - EMPHASIS ON PRESENCE OF SOVIET ADVISORS IS OVERDRAWN; POLICY AND IDEOLOGICAL GUIDANCE IS AND CAN BE EXERTED WITHOUT THEIR PRESENCE. IN PARA 2 NOTE SHOULD BE MADE OF ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES TO BULGARIA AS DISCUSSED PARAS 15 AND 16.

3. PARA 4 - REFERENCE IS MADE HERE AND SUBSEQUENT PARAS
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TO "CHRONIC LABOUR SHORTAGE". IT SHOULD BE HIGHLIGHTED

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AS WAS DONE AT DECEMBER EXPERTS MEETING THAT PROBLEM IS MORE ONE OF LOW LABOR PRODUCTIVITY RATHER THAN SHORTAGE OF NUMBERS. THIS APPLIES PARTICULARLY IN FIELD OF AGRICULTURE WHERE NUMBER OF WORKERS IS HIGH BY MODERN AGRICULTURAL STANDARDS.

4. PARAS 7, 8, 9 - 1975 ACHIEVEMENT, ALTHOUGH GENERALLY RESPECTABLE, SUBSTANTIALLY FAILED TO ACHIEVE PLAN. AGRICULTURE, PLAGUED BY DROUGHT, ACTUALLY FELL BELOW 1973 PERFORMANCE. (REFAIR B)

5. PARA 12 - SENTENCE BEGINNING "PRESUMABLY..." VZY OBSCURE. RECOMMEND STRAIGHTFORWARD STATEMENT THAT BULGARIANS WISH TO PRESERVE AND STRETCH HARD CURRENCY RESERVES BY REPAYMENT FROM PRODUCTION.

6. PARA 29 - FINAL SENTENCE OF PARA IS COMPLETELY MISLEADING. SOME FOREIGN RESIDENTS DO MAKE PERIODIC EXCURSIONS BUT HARDLY FOR WEEKEND SHOPPING.

7. PARAS 43 & 44 - ACCORDING TO BULGARIAN AND OTHER SOURCES, USSR IS SUPPLYING ROUGHLY 90 PERCENT RPT 90 PERCENT OF BULGARIA'S PETROLEUM NEEDS. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS NOT YET BEEN ANY LOCAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT, APPEARS CERTAIN INCREASED COST OF SOVIET OIL TO EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1975 APPLIES ALSO TO BULGARIA WITH CONCOMITTANT IMPLICATIONS FOR BULGARIAN ECONOMY. DAYS OF REST ARE NO LONGER STAGGERED THROUGH OUT BULGARIA'S DISTRICTS.

8. PARA 52 - ACCORDING TO BOTH BULGARIAN AND WESTERN SOURCES, PRICES OF PACKAGE TOURS SOLD ABROAD IN LOCAL CURRENCIES WILL NOT REFLECT REVALUATION AND WILL REMAIN CONSTANT OR INCREASE ONLY SLIGHTLY, STILL MAKING BULGARIA A BARGAIN AS FAR AS BASIC TOURIST SERVICES ARE CONCERNED.
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